GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

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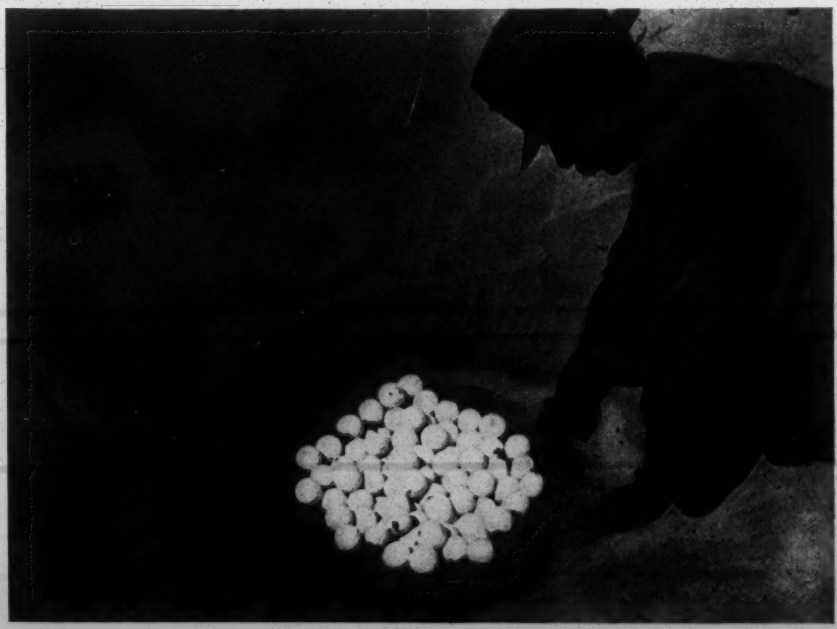

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NEST OF A LARGE SEA TURTLE

(See Bulletin No. 3.)

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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The Amur: A Factor in Manchurian Crises

MANY observers see behind the recent crises in Manchuria, the arrest of the Russian railroad manager at Harbin by a Chinese general, Japan's prohibition of fighting in the vicinity of Mukden and other acts of military strategy, a common cause in a new striving by Russia for an unfreezing port. The Amur River, as a trade outlet to the Pacific, is a road without an end. Still the upper Amur River is an important geographic fact in the trade activity of northern Manchuria.

The river forms for 750 miles the northern boundary of Manchuria and the southern boundary of the Siberian province of Amur. In the development of eastern Siberia the Amur River long played a rôle like that of our Mississippi in the development of our "first West." Large, well appointed steamboats were placed in service on the stream, and travelers could go in comfort for half the year where a short while before only the crudest facilities were available. Litttle settlements and a few important towns sprang up on the Russian side of the river, largely in the Amur Province.

Across the Amur to the south lies China, or rather Manchuria, which, before the World War, was being rapidly Russianized. Still, the river has been truly an international line, and this was proved, if by nothing else, by the extensive smuggling that went on across it.

Furs Beckoned Russia East

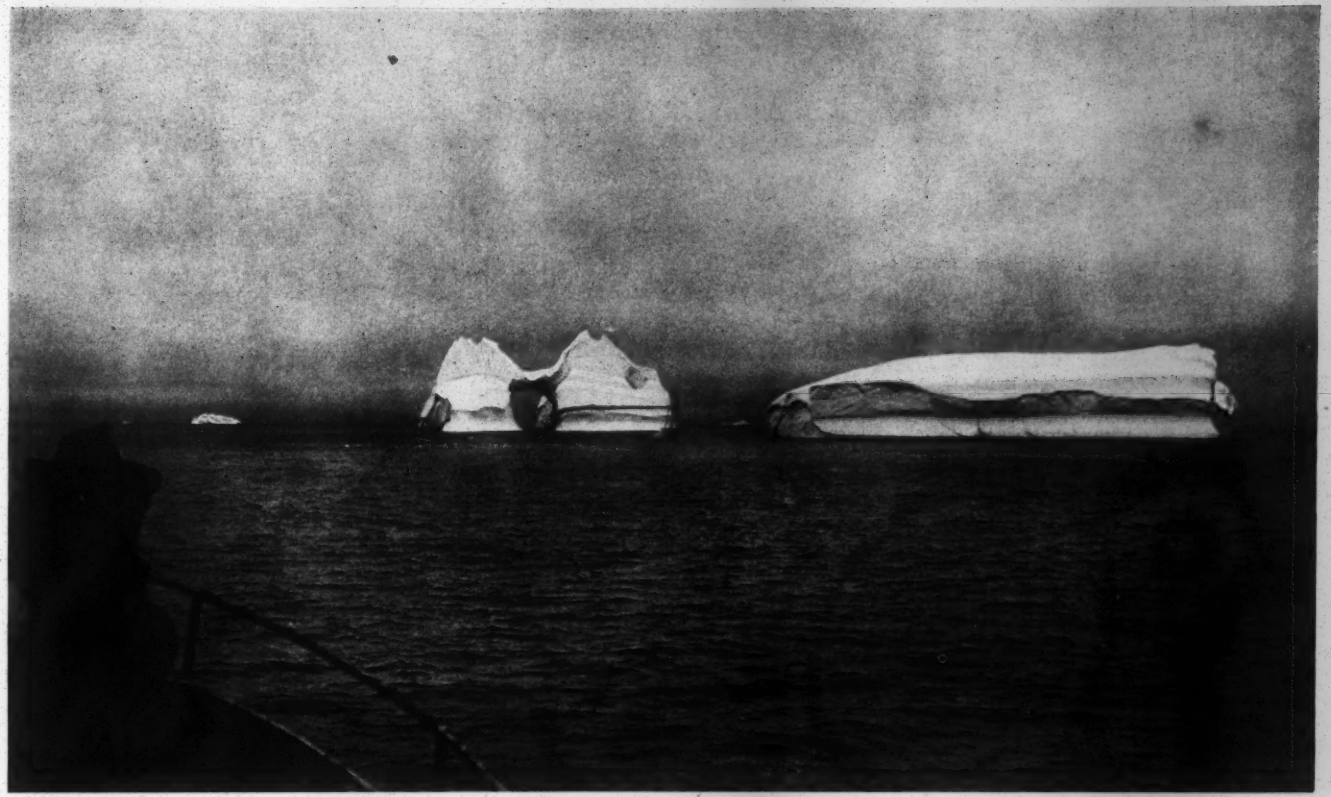
The Amur Province, which takes its name, of course, from the Amur River furnishes an important and adventurous chapter in the great epic of Russia's advance eastward to the Pacific—an advance ranking, in its influence on world history, with the push of other Europeans to the Western world.

The search for more furs, the particular sort of trade that led Russian adventurers into Asia, and eventually took the banner of the Russian church there, is a reversal of the popular idea that "trade follows the flag." Adventurers began feeling their way into Siberia from the Urals during the century after America was discovered. Forging their way eastward was not easy in the western half of Siberia because the drainage was all across their route and many broad rivers were encountered. But once past Lake Baikal they soon reached the headwaters of the Amur, and found Nature an ally instead of an enemy. The seventeen hundred or more miles of the river's length extend chiefly east and west; and once on its current the pioneers found it possible to reach the far distant Pacific in a matter of weeks. The Amur, then, became the great highway for Russian migration in the centuries to follow.

For a time after the early exploration of the Amur, a treaty with China and wars in Europe brought Russian activity in far eastern Siberia to a standstill; but from about the middle of the nineteenth century onward development was rapid.

River Frozen in Winter

The Amur Province is in the same latitude as Newfoundland and has a climate that in some ways is comparable to the climate of that far northern American land. The winters are severe, the temperature sometimes falling to



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MIDNIGHT SAILING INTO THE HOME OF THE ICEBERGS

This splendid arched berg was encountered by the National Geographic Society Expedition led by Commander MacMillan. The *Bowdoin's* 60-foot masts are quite dwarfed beside the ice mass, seven-eighths of which is below the water. Within a few hours after this photograph was made the fog was so dense that one could scarcely see the length of the ship, and further cruising among the bergs of upper Baffin Bay was suspended until morning brought a clearer sky (see Bulletin No. 2).

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Icebergs Are the Prize of a War of Sea Currents

MARCH is the month when the International Ice Patrol takes up its work of guarding the North Atlantic steamers from icebergs.

Two vessels, the *Tampa* and the *Modoc*, stand watch alternately at the lower end of the Grand Banks until July to prevent a recurrence of the *Titanic* tragedy, which resulted in the creation of the International Ice Patrol. The Labrador current begins to gain strength and push its limits south in the early part of February. In the last part of April it reaches its maximum strength, bringing icebergs well down toward, and sometimes into, the steamer lane between Europe and America. Most of the icebergs which are big enough to last the 1800-mile journey come from ten principal producing glaciers of Greenland.

Vision Tropic Climate for England

Various plans have been suggested for the elimination of the icebergs from the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. The most recent one is offered by a Canadian scientist who would explode thermite shells in them. These shells contain aluminum and iron oxide which, when ignited under certain conditions will develop a temperature near 6,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Thermite is the material used to weld street car rails. The Canadian has had some success in breaking up St. Lawrence River ice jams.

Certain engineers at one time planned a great dike across Belle Isle Straits diverting the chill waters to mid-ocean. Others proposed stretching a great cable over the Grand Banks to cause a sand-bar which was expected to confine the Arctic outflow to a deep depression near Greenland where it could flow under the Gulf stream without cooling it and on into the Sargasso Sea. Undiluted the Gulf stream might then reach English and Scandinavian shores even warmer than it is now, wafting on its waves a climate comparable to that of southern Japan for the British Isles.

Labrador Current's Little Brother

Product of vast melting ice fields, the Labrador current, constant as the seasons for uncounted years, has swept down from snowbound Baffin and Hudson Bays, through Davis Strait between Newfoundland and Greenland. Most of it drifts over the Grand Banks, one of the world's greatest fishing grounds, slipping over the bank's edge near the ocean-liner path, either mingling with the Gulf stream or sliding under it, seeping down toward the Equator along the ocean bottom. A small offshoot flows through Belle Isle Straits between Newfoundland and the tip of Labrador and, joining the St. Lawrence, hugs the Nova Scotian and East Atlantic shores, only completely fusing with the mighty Gulf stream off the Carolinas.

This "Cabot Stream" gives New England the same temperatures as North Scotland, although Edinburgh, for example, is as much nearer the North Pole than New York, as New York is north of Havana, Cuba.

But Massachusetts might be compelled to make boots and shoes sacred, instead of the famous cod, if the Labrador current were deflected. Scientists have determined that plankton, minute life in sea water necessary for fish, thrive in the Labrador current and give it a characteristic green color. The

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40° below zero Fahrenheit. The summers, however, are hot and at times the thermometer climbs to above the 100 mark. The country has extensive forest-covered hills which extend in many places down to the Amur. Other parts of the river's banks, however, are plains originally covered with thickets which have now been cleared away. The soil has proved rich and well adapted to grain growing and to bearing a heavy growth of grass.

When the Siberian railway was pushed through at the end of the nineteenth century and the gigantic "cut-off" was made through Manchuria, it set things back on the Amur for a while. But after the Russo-Japanese War, Russia's hold on Manchuria was weakened and the empire began building the western half of the great railroad just north of the Amur where it would be entirely on Muscovite territory. Tremendous hardships were encountered in crossing bogs and forests and crossing great rivers; but the job was about completed when the World War broke out. This long stretch of railway paralleling the Amur from 50 to 75 miles north of it, is one of the most valuable assets in the Amur region.

Amur Town Witnesses a Gold Rush

Blagoveshchensk, on the middle Amur, has recently seen a gold rush that proved to be a "gold bubble." Destitute prospectors have been streaming into town from the fields where a small localized deposit was discovered.

Blagoveshchensk connected with the Amur railway by a branch line, is the metropolis of the province, a town of about 45,000 inhabitants. Spread out along the river bank, with its spires and domes showing against the skyline, it makes an imposing appearance to the traveler on the river, especially since it contrasts so noticeably with the little river towns. Across the river is a Chinese town known locally as Sakalin, but appearing under numerous aliases on the maps. Many of Sakalin's inhabitants, too, have their aliases, for it is a haven for smugglers.

The Amur Province is some 650 miles long, and its greatest width is 340 miles. Its 154,000 square miles of area give it a size close to that of California.

Form for Renewal of Bulletin Requests

Many requests for the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS were made for the year ending with this issue. If you desire the Bulletins continued kindly notify The Society promptly. The attached form may be used:

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Kindly send.....copies of the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS for the school year beginning with the issue of....., for classroom use, to

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Ascension: A Quarter-Deck Island

LONDON'S demand for turtle soup may turn Ascension Island, which is in the middle of the South Atlantic halfway between South America and Africa, from an annual loss to the British Empire to a profitable bit of territory. Giant turtles recently have been shipped alive to England on steamers which have touched at the island.

No vertebrate life is native to the island. But in the spring Ascension has always been a land of gigantic turtles. Thousands of the reptiles, weighing 500 to 800 pounds each, swarm to the beaches at that time and deposit their eggs in the sand. "Flocks" of turtles are kept in ponds and from time to time individuals are made into soup and other delicacies for the garrison.

A "Crew" of Three Hundred

Ascension Island is unique among British possessions because of the method by which it is governed. Officially it is no different from a ship. A naval captain under an admiral stationed at Gibraltar controls the rather limited destiny of the six by seven mile territory for all the world like his fellow captains control their ships. The little garrison and its families, and the servants, who are largely negroes from Liberia—only 200 or 300 inhabitants at most—make up the "crew" of the good "ship" *Ascension*. The queer governmental arrangement has worked out most satisfactorily since the island was first occupied by the British in 1815, and has won the praise of such an observer as Charles Darwin who stopped for a while on Ascension during a voyage for scientific study.

Ascension is, broadly speaking, a companion isle to St. Helena, 800 miles to the southeast. Both were probably created by the same general volcanic upheaval which pushed a number of pinnacles above the surface of the south Atlantic. But Ascension has not been able to boast of being the place of residence of an exiled monarch, though its occupation was connected in a way with Napoleon's exile.

More Isolated Than Crusoe's Island

The island was occupied by the British navy in 1815 largely for the purpose of more completely guarding the isolation of the distinguished prisoner. It has since been maintained in the double capacity of a supply station for British naval vessels and the mountain site of a sanatorium for sailors and marines sick as a result of duty on the tropical coast of Africa.

The isolation of Ascension is more marked even than that of Robinson Crusoe's island. It is 1,000 miles from Liberia, the nearest point in Africa, and 1,400 miles from the eastern tip of South America. Like practically all of the other islands of the South Atlantic, Ascension was discovered by the Portuguese. That was in 1501. It was uninhabited and remained unoccupied until the time of Napoleon's exile.

Water, Water Everywhere, But Rain Is Lacking

There is nothing about Ascension to prove attractive to settlers. All of the lower part of the island is practically without plant life because of drought.

Gulf stream, on the other hand, is more blue, the desert color of the oceans, since it is less rich in plankton. Even if the halibut, pollock and cod of the Grand Banks could stand the higher temperature of the Gulf stream, loss of a "full dinner pail" would probably make the Banks barren of fish.

Equal to 2,000 Mississippis

The Gulf stream, impelled by the prevailing west wind and slipping under the rotating earth, tends to drift toward Europe. Ponce de Leon, searcher for eternal youth, discovered the Gulf stream off Florida where it attains the speed of the Mississippi River between the mouths of the Arkansas and the Ohio Rivers, yet rushing along with a volume equal to 2,000 Mississippis. Benjamin Franklin, engaging in oceanography as one of his many side lines, determined the limits of the Gulf stream. His researches enabled the American privateers to outmaneuver the British and thus helped win the Revolutionary War.

Bulletin No. 2, February 22, 1926.

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TROOP TRANSPORT IN THE DOLOMITE ALPS

Steel cables were strung from height to height and were used to transport men, guns and provisions on the Italian front during the World War. Owing to the difficulty of constructing roads and keeping them free from avalanches, this constituted the only means of communication in the high mountain regions during the long winter season and often also during the summer months. Expert Italian engineers called to the colors from their work in the South African mining districts brought this idea of transportation, the "teliferica," with them into the Alps (see Bulletin No. 5).

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Around the World With Radio

THE recent world radio test in which American fans made a concerted effort to get stations in Europe, Africa and South America directs attention to the fact that most other countries have not nearly the number of broadcasting stations that the United States has.

Although wireless telegraph stations pepper a world map, radio broadcasting stations are still scarce except in the United States, Canada, Cuba, England, Spain and France.

Argentinians Listen to Legislature

France has nineteen broadcasting stations to Germany's sixteen. Even India will shortly have ten. Despite governmental curbs in nearly every place except in North America, new radio towers are springing up all over the face of the earth. On the whole, American listeners find the overseas programs little different, except in language, when they get them successfully.

Argentinians now sit in on the discussions of their national legislature. The heated debates are carried to the firesides on the pampas. Vienna and some other European capitals have broadcast operas regularly. In Finland it is now becoming fashionable to go to your favorite cafe and listen to the evening program.

Despite the challenge of the electric bulb the sun has had a pretty stern hand on the habits of man. Until radio came along, the sun alone seemed able to stir up a froth of activity on the earth, filling roads with vehicles and homes with voices as it swept the surface with light or left it plunged in darkness. Then some months ago music for evening diners in the United States served as a breakfast concert in Australia. Old Sol's scepter wavered then. To add insult to the injury that accomplishment gave to the sun's control of man's affairs, residents on the West African coast abstain from sun-ordained sleep until 2 a. m. to hear that same American supper jazz.

Around World in 5 Seconds

Once the sun considered it pretty good time to diffuse its rays 25,000 miles around the earth in 24 hours. On a recent relay test radio telegraphy galloped around the earth in five seconds.

Broadcasting is too recent a development to have experience with the ogre War. What would happen to it under military necessity is mostly conjecture. The last war may have cast a pointing shadow with the fact that broadcasting was suppressed in the occupied territory of Germany. The League of Nations, in the interest of preserving peace, is reported to be planning a great station on Mt. Saleve, overlooking Geneva, capable of sending around the world. Mexico is probably the only country which has made use of radio broadcasting in war. During the last revolution bulletins from the front were put on the air at Mexico City.

Amoy Picks Up the Outside World

The internationalism of radio is well illustrated by recent reports from Amoy, the famous old sea-coast port of China where tea got its name. The

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Only the upper part of Green Mountain, which reaches a height of more than 2,800 feet, supports a growth of grass and shrubs. It is near the summit of this mountain that a sanatorium is maintained. A limited acreage in the uplands furnishes vegetables and fruits for the sanatorium and for the little hamlet of Georgetown established on the lee shore near an anchorage. Grasses and shrubs have also been planted on the lower uplands.

Bulletin No. 3, February 22, 1926.

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WAR-TIME "PULLMANS" DELUXE ON THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD

The Trans-Siberian railroad is now reported to be in good condition again and it is advertising for tourist trade. The total length of the line with all branches is more than 5,400 miles. More than 1000 miles of this is through Chinese Manchuria (see Bulletin No. 1).

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Italian Rule in Italian Trentino Disturbs Germany

NEITHER Trentino nor Trieste border German territory but German public opinion has become aroused over this city and this district in "Italia redenta," which is the territory long claimed by Italy and acquired by her at the close of the war.

Hamburg is nervous because Italian Trieste is capturing much of the Czecho-slovakian export trade. Featured still more in the German press are restrictions which Italian Fascisti have drafted and are planning for the natives of German blood living in Trentino. In Germany and in Austria Trentino is known as Southern Tyrol and has been a scene of contention between Italian and German residents before.

Italy's acquisition of Trentino has not altogether solved the problem always created when two peoples of divergent culture must live together, nor has the shifting of the international border a number of miles to the northward greatly altered the attitudes of the ancient enemies whose lands it divides.

Trentino's Checkered Career

Trentino has had a more checkered career even than Alsace-Lorraine. Civilized by the Romans and made a province of the empire to which the Italians love to feel they have fallen heir, the district remained under one or another of Roman, Italian or Lombard control until 1027 when it was severed from Italy and given into the hands of Prince Bishops of Trent under more or less nominal German control. In 1803 the country became Austrian, in 1805 Bavarian. The French under Napoleon captured it in 1809 and held it until 1814 when it was again handed over to Austria. It remained Austrian until Italy's soldiers "redeemed" it during the World War.

Through all these vicissitudes, however, the Italian language and Italian culture persisted, with especial strength, of course, in the south, toward the Italian border. That border dipped far south of the crest of the Alps to bring the Trentino into the Austrian Empire, crossing valleys and running along hills rather than mountains. The Irredentist movement not only maintained that the Italian-speaking people of the Trentino should be enfolded within the borders of Italy, but it echoed the assertion of the proud old Roman Empire that Rome must reach to the crest of the Alps.

German Influence Fought a Losing Battle

Tyrol, north of the Alps, was Germanicized early. But the mountain barrier slowed up the southern advance of German influence. Despite direct Germanic control for a century and German influence for a much longer period, the Trentino was appreciably Germanicized only in the extreme north. In Bolzano (which the Austrians called Bozen), 40 miles south of the main ridge of the Alps in the Adige Valley, the conflict between the two cultures was evident. The streets and squares bore German names and the store signs German characters. The slim steeple of the parish church was undeniably Gothic. But though one of the principal streets bore the name Laubengasse the graceful arches of its arcaded sides proclaimed Italy, and the trade in their shadows was largely carried on in Italian.

United States trade representative stationed at Amoy reports that it is a good market for radio sets since an amateur working with a small set picked up Shanghai, from which he got a program alternately in English and Chinese. Then he tuned in on Manila 550 miles southeast and later got Japanese singing from Tokio more than 1,000 miles away.

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BRINGING NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO TO THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

A party exploring the Columbia Ice Field carried a portable set with which they kept in touch with the world. Often the aerial was strung between a tepee pole and a pine tree.

South from Bolzano German influence carried on a losing fight. Trento (called by the Austrians Trient, and by the English Trent), thirty miles farther south, and almost an equal distance within the Austrian border, was all but an acknowledged Italian city. There was practically no touch of German architecture here, no camouflage of German names. It was and is a city of medieval Italian palaces like many of its sister municipalities of the Lombard plain, and its streets bore the Romance names they had borne through the centuries. The German language was rarely heard except in military orders, and its unfamiliar letters appeared only now and then below proclamations in Italian.

The Landscape Is Italian

Most conspicuous of the German touches, perhaps, was that contributed by the quaintly garbed pre-World War Austrian soldiers, the Kaiserjager with their jaunty plumed hats. The note they struck in Trento was obviously alien; and their plumes even were not so jaunty as those of the Bersaglieri who now stand guard.

The Trentino, sloping to the south, receives a flood of light and warmth which the region north of the Alps cannot know. Just as German culture became less and less influential to the south of the Alpine divide, so the pines and firs of central Europe dwindle away until not far south of Bolzano they have disappeared. The slopes and peaks and cliffs of Southern Trentino are largely bare and the climate is warm. But the valley floors are carpeted with grasses and plants of luxurious growth, and in them grow grapes from which excellent wine is made. Even the heights which appear so desolate in the glare of full daylight are gilded and tinted into wonderlands by the rising and setting sun, a fact which has led some students to assert that there Dante got inspiration for both his "Inferno" and his "Paradiso."

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ITALIANS RECLAIMING ITALIA IRREDENTA

Skirmish line of Italian skimen advancing in attack during the World War. These troops mounted on skis could descend upon an enemy position like a flock of great white birds.